

UC San Diego

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Title

Evaluating the Impact of an Introductory Course on Medical Students Participating in UCSD Student Run Free Clinic Project

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Research Question:

The goal of this study is to assess the impact of a required, quarter-long preparatory course on medical students' ability to effectively participate in a student-run free clinic and grapple with its ethical nuances.

Methods:

A one-time, cross-sectional survey was administered to all 55 students in the UCSD Student-Run Free Clinic Project's (SRFCP) quarter-long introductory course. A Likert 5-point scale was used to survey student's impressions of how the course impacted 1) clinical skills, 2) understanding of ethics, 3) social and community issues, 4) sense of community, and 5) future motivation to work with the underserved. Mean scores (with standard deviations) were generated for each topic.

Results:

Students found the course useful for building a variety of clinical skills (3.97), including newly designed sessions such as working with interpreters (4.18) or effectively pre-charting (3.95). The course also deepened students' awareness of social issues (4.08) and connectedness to peers (3.76), particularly through an MS1-MS4 teaching model (4.38). Students had mixed perceptions (3.55) on the ethical nuances of SRFCP. A majority felt prepared to work with SRFCP (4.16) and underserved groups (4.29) in the future.

Significance:

This required didactic helped students feel more prepared to work in SRFCP and strengthened long-term motivation to work with the underserved. A breadth of discussion on ethics, community resources, and health equity helped students define their role in an imperfect system. This study is a call to thoughtfully prepare students to work in free clinics in order to provide the highest quality patient care.